

the use of “hard” drugs, drugs alone, or drugs in combination with alcohol. A likely explanation is that heavy substance users either “burn out,” do not survive to older ages, or are in prison for drug-related offenses already.

- With regard to self-reported, proximate substance use (past 72 hours), alcohol use and alcohol use alone are both more common among males. Among white males, the proportion using alcohol is higher than in any other gender-race grouping. Marijuana use, alone and in combination with alcohol, is also much more common among males than females. The proximate use of alcohol and drugs in combination is more common among males than females and among non-whites than among whites.
- More than half of adult arrestees reported use of alcohol within 72 hours of their arrests for violent crimes, drug offenses, and other offenses. Tobacco use was even more commonly reported in the 72 hours before arrests for violent, property, drug, and other offenses. Eight-two percent of those arrested for alcohol offenses also had used tobacco. Self-reported proximate marijuana use was especially likely to be reported by arrestees for drug offenses (56%), while cocaine/crack use was reported by 27% of arrestees charged with drug offenses, and 17% of those charged with property offenses.

Drug Test Results

- For Tennessee’s adult SANTA study, 1,246 eligible arrestees were approached for an interview, and 1,142 (92%) provided their informed consent. Of the 1,142 adult arrestees agreeing to participate in the SANTA study, 859 (75%) provided a urine specimen for drug testing, and 1,027 (90%) provided a saliva specimen.
- The Q.E.D. and PharmChem tests for alcohol did not yield identical results. Of the 767 adult SANTA arrestees who provided both urine and saliva specimens, 145 (19%) had negative results from one test and positive results from the other. For the purposes of this study, the Q.E.D. and PharmChem test results for alcohol will be combined by assuming that a positive result for alcohol on either test indicates recent use of alcohol.

Analysis of Composite Test Results by Site, Age, Race/Sex, and Crime

- There may be under-reporting of proximate substance use within the adult SANTA sample, since nearly one-third of the sample (30%) deny using alcohol or drugs in the preceding seventy-two hours, but just over one-fifth (22%) test negative for all substances. However, caution should be exercised in making too much of this discrepancy, since long-term retention of some substance metabolites may falsely suggest mis-reporting of near-term use.